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ABSTRACT

Polls dealing with American public education conducted since 1936 are examined, and over 60 items were chosen to illustrate: (1) changes in public opinion since 1960 that might have altered students' evaluations of college attendance or academic excellence, and (2) changes prior to 1960 that might have affected the quality of preparation for college and might have contributed to the decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. All levels of schooling were criticized during the late 1950's, with increasing satisfaction during the 1960's, and a renewed dissatisfaction at the end of the sixties. It would probably be impossible to reconstruct opinion changes between 1950 and 1970 in sufficient detail to relate them to changes in SAT scores. A significant drop in the public's rating of the schools was recorded between 1974 and 1975, but this decline leveled off between 1975 and 1976. However, the public believes that the recent decline in national test scores means that the quality of education is declining; it would like more attention paid to basic skills and to discipline in the schools in order to counteract the perceived decline of quality in the schools. The public is generally inclined, however, to blame the parents rather than the schools. (Author/EVH)

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Available Evidence on Public Attitudes toward Education

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With a supplement of excerpts from
Eighth Annual Survey of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools.
A Project Jointly Conducted by The Gallup Poll and
the Charles F. Kettering Foundation.
Public Opinion Surveys, Princeton, New Jersey, 1976

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Prepared for the Advisory Panel on
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This appendix is one of 27 that have been published individually to supplement On Further Examination: Report of the Advisory Panel on the Scholastic Aptitude Test Score Decline. The report itself is available at $4 from College Board Publication Orders, Box 2815, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. Additional copies of this appendix, at $3 per copy, as well as a price list for all the appendixes, can be obtained from the same address. Payment must accompany any order not submitted on an institutional purchase order.

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This memorandum reports on my search of the archives of American public opinion and survey data for items that could be used to examine (1) changes in public opinion since 1960 that might have affected high school students' Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) performance directly (e.g., by providing a "climate" in which academic excellence or college education in general is less highly valued), or (2) changes prior to 1960 that might have affected the quality of their preparation. A list of sources reviewed appears as Appendix A. Although there may be scattered items (or even one or two entire surveys) that have eluded me, I am confident that I have looked at the vast majority of the questions dealing with education asked by the major American survey organizations from 1936 to 1970. My search was less systematic -- and this catalogue is therefore probably least exhaustive -- for the period after 1970, but I assume that changes since then would have little direct bearing on the problems under review by the Advisory Panel on Score Decline, except insofar as one could look at the students of the 1960s as they leave school and enter the pollsters' "population".

Given the quasi-political nature of most of the polls, it is perhaps not surprising that the largest set of questions deals with education as an issue: in particular, with school taxes, federal aid to education, teachers' salaries, and the like. Questions of this sort might be used inferentially to study attitudes toward education, but there are so many extraneous factors affecting responses to them that I excluded them categorically. Similarly, a great many questions dealing with school desegregation, with aid to parochial schools, with high school and college athletics, and other subjects only marginally relevant were not considered further.

With these exclusions, some 130 items remained. For slightly over half of these, frequency distributions were available, either in published sources or because the data are stored in the data library of the Institute for Research in Social Science. These are the data reported in the tables to follow. For the other 60-some items, frequency distributions could be obtained at a modest charge (and the data obtained for analysis at a somewhat less modest charge) from the Roper Center, which holds these data. These items are listed (chronologically, for the most part) in Appendix B. I did not engage the Roper Center to supply me with these data because it is my impression (based on inspection of the data already in hand) that they would be of relatively little use, except perhaps in combination with data from a newly commissioned survey (see below). Similarly, I confined my analysis of the data available here to simple comparison of the frequency distributions across time.

In the data on the following pages, despite the problems introduced by varying question-wordings and missing observations at critical time-points, I believe I discern a few trends -- although whether they are striking enough in magnitude and implication to warrant further investigation is questionable. Let me summarize what I think the pattern is, before dealing with the tables in detail.

After a period of heightened criticism of American education at all levels during the late 1950s, Americans expressed increasing satisfaction with their schools and colleges during the 1960s, until the end of the decade, when they once again came under fire. If this summary is correct (and it is at least generally consistent with the data), it is correlated in an interesting way with the pattern of changes in SAT scores. It is

tempting to relate the dissatisfaction of the late 1950s to Sputnik and that of the late 1960s to perceived disorder in the schools and on campuses, but there is of course no way to do this within the framework of these data. (The latter connection is especially doubtful, since Americans' recent disenchantment with education seems to have taken place in the context of a more general disillusionment with our national institutions.) If the critical mood of the late 1950s was followed, as I believe it was, by a period of increasing expressed satisfaction, it is difficult to know whether this was a response to a more satisfactory educational system or simply a reflection of growing indifference.

Table 1 shows the pattern for the 1960s. The observations for 1963 and 1966 are particularly telling, since the questions were worded identically. Allowing for differences in the wording of the questions, there is a fairly steady increase in expressed satisfaction (although the euphoria of 1946 remained unmatched) until the 1970 observation reverses the trend. Table 2 shows the end-of-decade change in greater detail and shows that it applies to colleges as well as to the public schools. "Great confidence" in higher education characterized three out of five Americans in 1967; its absence characterized three out of five in 1971. I should note that nearly every other American institution suffered a concurrent loss of public confidence, and that higher education's relative position -- now second only to medicine -- may even have improved somewhat. But this change is of little interest here, something that happened at the end of the sixties could not have produced a change that got under way at the decade's outset.

Table 3 throws a little more light on the other end of this period. If attitudes toward homework can be taken as a measure of concern for how demanding American high schools are, these data suggest heightened concern around 1958, followed by a gradual decline until at least 1965. The differences between 1954 and 1955 are almost certainly due to the wording of the questions. ("about right" omitted in 1954). But whether 1954 or 1955 is taken as the baseline, there is a substantial increase by 1958 in the proportion of Americans who feel that high school students aren't working hard enough outside school: for the first time, a majority hold this view. By 1961, however, either the situation or people's views of it changed, and by 1965 a solid majority of those with opinions on the matter felt that high school students were doing enough homework. Table 4 shows that, although a majority of Americans felt that the public schools were not demanding enough in 1958, consistent majorities opposed and continued to oppose lengthening the school day or the school year.

Table 5 shows that most Americans in recent years have felt that discipline in the public schools is not strict enough. In this respect, 1970 looks about like the 1950s, and we lack data from the 1960s to see what happened during that interesting decade (although data not reported here show that support for corporal punishment in the schools increased between 1954 and 1958, but declined by the late 1960s). Two surveys from 1954 allow us to say that people seem to feel that the situation in their local schools is better than that in "most schools," and that, in 1954 at least, they are inclined to blame other children's parents rather than school officials for the problem.

Tables 6-9 present an odd lot of items that do not lend themselves to the study of trends but might supply a baseline for a study undertaken today. In particular, the items in Table 7, dealing with how students of

different ability should be treated, might shed some light on the rise or decline of meritocratic standards in the United States. Table 9 suggests that such standards were increasingly felt to be appropriate for teachers between 1958 and 1965. Table 8 may be of particular interest to the College Board, although it is only peripherally related to the present topic.

Where do we go from here? If, as I have suggested, obtaining more secondary data for analysis from the Roper Center and analyzing those already in hand more intensively are not likely to be productive, there are two possibilities: (1) to go into the field with a follow-up study in order to obtain trend data based on some of the questions asked earlier, or (2) simply to note that there were some changes taking place in the late 1950s and early 1960s, that they may have had something to do with the decline in test scores, but that it is now too late to study them systematically -- at least with survey data.

If I lean to the latter, it is because I am afraid that data collected now could not be treated convincingly as points on a trend line begun around 1960. Rather, measures now would reflect the general souring of opinion that I believe took place in the late 1960s. I would be reluctant to relate changes in opinion between, say, 1960 and 1976 to changes in SAT scores in the early and middle 1960s.

Table 1. Items Bearing on Satisfaction with Public Schools and personnel

		1946	1948	1955	1963	1965	1966	1967	1970
Are you satisfied with the school your child goes to?[1]	Yes	87%							
	No	13							
On the whole, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with your children's education [education children are getting today]?[2]	Satisfied				66%		75%		
	Dissatisfied				26		17		
	No opinion				8		8		
How would you rate the quality of public school education in this community--[3]	Excellent					26%			
	Pretty good					45			
	Only fair					15			
	Poor					6			
	No opinion					8			
How would you rate the quality of public education in America today--[4]	Excellent								14%
	Pretty good								50
	Only fair								23
	Poor								9
	No opinion								3
Do you think the public schools generally do a good job or a poor job on preparing children for their future?[5]	Good							71%	
	Poor							19	
	No opinion							10	
Do you think children today are being educated better or worse than you were?[6]	Better		59%						
	Same (vol.)		10						
	Worse		26						
	No opinion		5						
[Reading taught better today than when respondent was in school?][7]	Better			36%					
	Same (vol.)			11					
	Worse			41					
	No opinion			12					

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

		1946	1948	1955	1963	1965	1966	1967	1970
[Teachers in local schools do [job--][8]	Well	60%							
	Fair	29							
	Poorly	8							
	No opinion	3							
In general, how would you rate the teachers in the public school system in this community?[9]	Excellent					22%			
	Pretty good					48			
	Only fair					14			
	Poor					2			
	No opinion					15			

1. AIPO 376K. Unclear whether this was asked only of parents. 40 percent had no criticism when asked.
2. AIPO 675K and AIPO 735K. Increase in percent satisfied was 7 percent among whites, 22 percent among blacks.
3. Harris 1522
4. Harris 2050 (women only)
5. AIPO 745A
6. AIPO 420K. Cross-national comparisons available
7. AIPO 552K. College-educated and those over 50 most critical
8. AIPO 376K. See note 1, above
9. Harris 1522

Table 2. Evaluation of College and University Personnel

		1960	1966	1967	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Different groups work for one candidate or another. Are there any groups on this list that you particularly trust -- that is, would you be more likely to vote for candidates they recommend? Are there any. . .[for which] you would be more likely to vote against candidates they recommend? -- "College groups"[1]	Trust.	9%							
	No reaction.	90							
	Distrust	2							
As far as the people in charge of running _____ are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence. . .in them? -- higher education[2]	Yes.		61%	62%	37%	33%	44%	40%	36%
	No + no opinion. . .		39	38	63	67	56	60	64

1. SRC Election Study
2. Harris Poll, published reports. Parallel declines were observed for all institutions (except the media) for which this question was asked.

Table 3. Items Related to Homework in the Public Schools

		1954	1955	1958	1961	1965
Do you think high school students today are given too much or not enough homework to do?[1]	Too much.	8%				
	About right (vol.).	26				
	Not enough.	40				
	No opinion.	26				
Do you think students in our high schools should be given more homework, less homework, or do you think they are given about the right amount now?[2]	Give less		6%			
	About right now . .		38			
	Give more		25			
	No opinion.		31			
Should high school students be required to put in more hours of homework each week?[3]	No.			33%		47%
	Yes			51		39
	No opinion.			16		14
Would you favor or oppose increasing the amount of school work done at home by students -- in high schools?[4]	Oppose.				39%	
	Favor				46	
	No opinion.				15	
-- in grade schools?	Oppose.				46%	
	Favor				41	
	No opinion.				13	

1. AIPO 538
2. AIPO 555
3. AIPO 607 and AIPO 710
4. AIPO 642. Published figures differ slightly from these. In each case, these data show 5-6 percent more "don't knows" and correspondingly less opposition.

Table 4. Items Related to Time Spent in School

		1958	1961	1965
Do you think our public schools today demand too much work or too little work from the students?[1]	Too little.	51%		
	Too much.	6		
	About right (vol.).	33		
	No opinion.	10		
Should high school students be required to put in more hours of work in school each week?[2]	Yes	35%		36%
	No.	52		52
	No opinion.	13		12
Would you favor or oppose increasing the number of hours spent in classrooms per day -- in high schools?[3]	Favor		42%	
	Oppose.		50	
	No opinion.		9	
-- in grade schools?	Favor		33%	
	Oppose.		60	
	No opinion.		8	
Would you favor or oppose increasing the number of days per year spent in school -- for high school students?[4]	Favor		28%	
	Oppose.		63	
	No opinion.		9	
-- for grade school students?	Favor		25%	
	Oppose.		67	
	No opinion.		8	
[Opinion of plan to keep schools open year round, with summer devoted to arts and skills][5]	Favor			46%
	Oppose.			47
	No opinion.			6

1. AIPO 595K
2. AIPO 607 and AIPO 710
3. AIPO 642
4. AIPO 642. In all items from this survey, the published reports show somewhat fewer "don't knows."
5. AIPO 710

Table 5. Items Related to Discipline in the Public Schools

		1954	1957	1965	1970
Do you think discipline in the public schools in this community is too strict or not strict enough?[1]	Too strict	1%			
	About right	38			
	Not strict enough	43			
	No opinion	18			
Do you think discipline in most schools today is too strict, or not strict enough?[2]	Too strict	2%			
	About right	25			
	Not strict enough	65			
	No opinion	8			
(Do you think discipline in most homes today is too strict or not strict enough?)[3]	Too strict	1%			
	About right	12			
	Not strict enough	83			
	No opinion	4			
Who do you think is more to blame for [the lack of discipline in the schools] -- the school officials for being too easy on the children, or the parents for not allowing school officials to be stricter?[4]	Parents	41%			
	Officials	6			
	Both, equally	17			
	No lack of discipline	34			
	No opinion	1			
Do you think teachers should be permitted to discipline their students more strictly than they do at present, or not?[5]	Should		70%		
	Should not		21		
	No opinion		9		
In general, do you feel young people in elementary school and high school have too much freedom, too little freedom, or about the right amount of freedom?[6]	Too much				49%
	About right				38
	Too little				5
	No opinion				8
Do you think high school students who won't behave and won't do their work should be allowed to stay in high school?[7]	Yes	29%			
	No	64			
	No opinion	7			

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

	1954	1957	1965	1970
[Opinion of strict school dress code][8]				
Favor			44%	
Oppose.			50	
No opinion.			6	

1. AIPO 533
2. AIPO 538
3. AIPO 538
4. AIPO 538
5. AIPO 587
6. Harris Poll 2050 (women respondents only)
7. AIPO 533
8. AIPO 710

Table 6. Items Related to Public School Curriculum

		1954	1955	1957	1965
Educators do not all agree on how much time should be spent teaching reading in the public schools. Do you, yourself, think reading is more important or less important than other school subjects?[1]	More important. . . .	67%			
	About same (vol.) . .	25			
	Less important. . . .	4			
	No opinion.	3			
If a pupil is having trouble with reading, do you think he should spend extra time catching up, if it means taking time away from other subjects?[2]	Yes	67%			
	Qualified	11			
	No.	17			
	No opinion.	4			
Do you think that grade schools today pay enough attention to teaching pupils how to read?[3]	Yes		39%	38%	
	No.		48	41	
	No opinion.		13	21	
-- how to spell?[4]	Yes			38%	
	No.			41	
	No opinion.			21	
-- how to express themselves in writing?[5]	Yes			38%	
	No.			37	
	No opinion.			25	
[Is there too much emphasis on extracurricular activities?][6]	Yes			38%	
	No.			49	
	No opinion.			13	
It has been suggested that a course in ethics or rules of conduct be given to students in high schools. Do you approve or disapprove of this plan?[7]	Approve				88%
	Disapprove.				5
	No opinion.				6

1. AIPO 533
2. AIPO 533
3. AIPO 552K and AIPO 587K
4. AIPO 587K
5. AIPO 587K
6. AIPO 587K
7. AIPO 710

Table 7. Items Related to Treatment of Students with Differing Ability

		1954	1958	1961
Should every public school pupil in the first eight grades be promoted at the end of the year, or should pupils who have failed most of their subjects be kept back?[1]	Promoted	13%		
	Kept back	75		
	Qualified	8		
	No Opinion	5		
Do you think that studies in the public schools should be made easy enough that every child can pass?[1]	Yes	16%		
	No	78		
	Qualified	2		
	No opinion	4		
In some public schools, pupils are divided into above-average and below-average sections for study and recitation, according to the scores they make on intelligence tests. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea?[1]	Good idea	61%		
	Poor idea	26		
	No opinion	13		
Some students entering high school can't read any better than the average third grader. Do you think very poor readers should be admitted to high school, or should they be kept back until they have caught up in reading?[1]	Admit	42%		
	Keep back	50		
	No opinion	7		
Some pupils don't learn much from books after the eighth grade. Our laws require them to stay in school anyway until they reach a certain age. What do you think we should do about high school students who don't like high school and aren't getting anything out of their studies?[1]	Make them go, as now	13%		
	Provide different training	71		
	Let them stop earlier	10		
	No opinion	6		
Instead of grouping students according to their scores on intelligence tests, some public schools group them according to their skill in each particular subject. . . .Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea?[1]	Good idea	71%		
	Poor idea	15		
	No opinion	15		

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

		1954	1958	1961
If your child had trouble learning to read, would you prefer that he study reading with other slow readers, or in a class where most of the other pupils read better and faster?[1]	With slow	67%		
	With better	26		
	No opinion	7		
Should teachers devote extra time to the bright students?[2]	Yes		28%	
	No		64	
	No opinion		8	
. . . . to the slow students?[2]	Yes		74%	
	No		12	
	No opinion		13	
Some people say that colleges should raise their entrance requirements, making it harder for high school graduates to enter. Do you think colleges should do this, or not?[3]	Should		27%	25%
	Should not		62	64
	No opinion		11	11

1. AIPO 533
2. AIPO 607
3. AIPO 595K and AIPO 642

Table 8. Items Related to Nationwide Testing Programs

		1958	1961	1965
Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard nationwide examination in order to get a high school diploma?[1]	Yes	43%	47%	48%
	No	36	43	43
	No opinion	21	9	9
Would you favor or oppose a nationwide test to be given to all high school students when they enter and when they graduate to enable parents to learn more about their children and their educational achievement?[2]	Favor		74%	
	Oppose		16	
	No opinion		10	

Table 9. Miscellaneous Items Related to the Teaching Profession

		1957	1958	1961	1965	1968
Would you like to have a daughter of yours go into teaching or not?[3]	Yes	74%				
	No	16				
	No opinion	10				
If you were advising a young person on choosing a career, would you advise this person to become a teacher, or not?[4]	Yes					62%
	No					24
	No opinion					14
Should pay raises for teachers in the public school system be based on teaching ability or on the length of service?[5]	Ability		66%	70%	74%	
	Service		17	16	15	
	Both (vol.)		7	4	4	
	No opinion		10	10	7	

1. AIPO 607, AIPO 642, and AIPO 710
2. AIPO 642
3. AIPO 587K
4. AIPO 770D
5. AIPO 607, AIPO 642, and AIPO 710

APPENDIX A. SOURCES SEARCHED FOR SURVEY ITEMS

Hastings, Philip K., and Southwick, Jessie C., eds., Survey Data for Trend Analysis: An Index to Repeated Questions in U.S. National Surveys Held by the Roper Public Opinion Research Center

The Gallup Poll, published reports

The Harris Poll, published reports

Institute for Research in Social Science, Descriptions of Harris Public Opinion Polls Available for Dissemination. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina

Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, Codebooks for Survey Research Center Election Studies, 1952-1972. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan

Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, Codebooks for National Opinion Research Center General Social Surveys. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan

Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, American Item Index (file of questions from all Gallup Poll surveys, selected Roper and NORC surveys, and miscellaneous others)

APPENDIX B. AVAILABLE ITEMS, FOR WHICH DATA WERE NOT OBTAINED

The questions listed here from the two Roper polls (1945 and 1949) are presented separately because each had a substantial battery of good items that would bear repeating in 1976. The note "Tab only" on the questions for the earlier study means that frequency distributions are available from the Roper Center but not the original data.

Items from Roper Study for Fortune, No. 46, January 1945
(Sample Size 3,500 - 4,499)

Question 2. Tab only.

After the war, if you had a son/daughter graduating from high school, would you prefer that he/she go on to college, or would you rather have him/her do something else, or would you not care one way or the other?

Question 3. Tab only.

A. People have different ideas about what they want their children to get out of college. Which of these things would you rate as very important for a son of yours to get out of college if he were to go and which would you rate as not so important? (List on reverse side.)

B. Now which one or two of these things you feel are very important would you consider most important for a son of yours to get out of college?

A. Training to fit him for a specific occupation or profession

B. The advantage of being recognized as a college man

C. A larger amount of factual information
D. A better appreciation of such things as literature, art, and music
E. Ability to think more logically
F. Ability to get along with and understand people
G. Desire and ability to be a more useful citizen
H. Moral growth

Question 4. Tab only.
A. Do you think there are many or only a few young people who are capable of going through college but do not go because they cannot afford to?

Question 5. Tab only.
In general do you think our colleges and universities are now doing as much as they should on -- ----, or do you think they should be doing more, or less?
A. Training students to be more useful citizens
B. Training students for positions of leadership
C. Training students in specialized fields like labor relations, government services, etc.
D. Setting up projects to help work out important problems facing local communities or the country as a whole
E. Educating the general public through lectures, radio programs, etc.
F. Providing scholars and scientists with opportunities for research

Question 6. Tab only.
Do you think ----- should or should not try to direct the way a professor teaches his subject in a college or university?
A. The other professors
B. The board of trustees
C. The government
D. The people who give large sums of money to a college
E. The people who have graduated from the college

Question 7. Tab only.
If the government should start giving some financial support to those colleges and universities now supported largely by money from private people, do you think the professors would have more freedom in teaching, less freedom, or about the same as now?

Items from Roper Study for Fortune, No 76, April 1949
(Sample Size 5,400 - 6,499)

Question 1.
A. If you had a boy graduating from high school, would you personally like to have him go on to college, or would you rather have him do something else?
B. Would you personally like to have him go to college if he wanted to or would you rather have him do something else?
C. Why would you like to have a son of yours go to college? What would you want him to get out of it?
D. What are some of the reasons why you do not want him to go to college?

Question 2.

A. If you had a girl graduating from high school, would you personally like to have her go on to college, or would you rather have her do something else?
B. Would you personally like to have her go to college if she wanted to or would you rather have her do something else?
C. Why would you like to have a daughter of yours go to college? What would you want her to get out of it?
D. What are some of the reasons why you do not want her to go to college?

Question 3.

A. Which three things on this list would you think were most important of all for college to give your son?
B. Which ones would you think were least important?

A. Desire and ability to be a more useful citizen
B. Preparation for marriage and family life
C. Training for a particular occupation or profession
D. Learning how to get along with all sorts of people
E. A better appreciation of such things as literature, art, and music
F. A broader knowledge of the world and world problems
G. A sharper, better trained mind in dealing with all sorts of problems
H. Development of a good moral character
I. A better chance to get ahead in the world
J. The intelligence and wisdom necessary to live a full life

Question 4.

A. Which three things on this list would you think were most important of all for college to give your daughter?
B. Which ones would you think were least important?

A. Desire and ability to be a more useful citizen
B. Preparation for marriage and family life
C. Training for a particular occupation or profession
D. Learning how to get along with all sorts of people
E. A better appreciation of such things as literature, art, and music
F. A broader knowledge of the world and world problems
G. A sharper, better trained mind in dealing with all sorts of problems
H. Development of a good moral character
I. A better chance to get ahead in the world
J. The intelligence and wisdom necessary to live a full life

Question 5.

In college, are there any subjects you think all boys should be required to study, no matter what they are going to do afterwards? What subjects?

Question 6.

In college, are there any subjects you think all girls should be required to study, no matter what they are going to do afterwards? What subjects?

Question 7.
So far as you are concerned, would you lean toward having a son of yours go to:
A. A college for boys only or to one that has both boy and girl students?
B. A college with a large number of students/more than a thousand/ or to a small college?
C. A college that has the kind of social clubs called fraternities or to a college that does not have them?

Question 8.
So far as you are concerned, would you lean toward having a daughter of yours go to:
A. A college for girls only or to one that has both boy and girl students?
B. A college with a large number of students/more than a thousand/ or to a small college?
C. A college that has the kind of social clubs called sororities or to a college that does not have them?

Question 9.
A. Which would you like a son of yours to do -- spend all his time in college on general, liberal arts education, all of it on professional education, or some of it on both?
B. About what share of his time in college would you like to see him spend on general, liberal arts education -- a quarter, a half, or three quarters?

Question 10.
A. Which would you like a daughter of yours to do -- spend all her time in college on general, liberal arts education, all of it on professional education, or some of it on both?
B. About what share of her time in college would you like to see her spend on general, liberal arts education -- a quarter, a half, or three quarters?

Question 13.
If you had to pick one college or university in the United States where a boy could get the best education, regardless of cost, what one would you pick?

Question 14.
If you had to pick one college or university in the United States where a girl could get the best education, regardless of cost, what one would you pick?

Question 15.
A. It has been proposed that the federal government in Washington provide money to send qualified high school students to college who otherwise could not afford to go. I would like you to read these arguments and tell me whether you are in favor of, or against, such a plan.
B. Can you tell me which one of the three arguments for/against the plan had the most influence on your decision?

Arguments in favor of plan:
A. There are lots of qualified high school graduates who cannot afford to go to college but who should have the chance.
B. Colleges need the extra money, since they cannot rely on gifts from rich men as much as they used to do.
C. The federal government would help out the students and colleges in the parts of the country that need help most.

Arguments against plan:
A. The federal government cannot afford it -- it is spending too much money now.
B. In the long run it would mean that the federal government would have too much influence on what the colleges teach.
C. If any part of government is going to pay for student expenses it should be the state government, not the federal government.

Question 16.
Here is a list of words, and I would like you to look them over and pick the three or four that best describe your idea of what the average college student is actually like: immoral, hard-working, radical, intelligent, well-informed, soft, time-wasting, well-mannered, overworked, conservative, hard-drinking, snobbish, ambitious, democratic.

Question 17.
Should colleges have classes that take up the subject of ---- or should ----- be discussed in classes only when students ask about it, or would it be better not to discuss it at all?
A. Racial and religious prejudice
B. Sex education
C. How to be a good parent
D. Religious beliefs
E. Communism

Question 18.
Here are several different ways in which college can deal with the subject of socialism and capitalism in class discussions with students. Which do you think is best?
1. Allow the professors to give only the arguments in favor of capitalism to students.
2. Require any professor who discusses the subject to give the arguments for both sides, but let him express his own opinion only if it is favorable to capitalism.
3. Require any professor to give the arguments for both sides, then let him express his own opinion, whatever it is, but try to have professors with differing opinions on the faculty.
4. Require any professor to give the arguments for both sides, but do not allow him to express any opinion of his own.
5. Do not know what socialism and/or capitalism is.

Question 19.
A. As you know, businessmen and rich people help support private colleges with gifts. Do you think these wealthy people ever try to influence what these colleges teach students about capitalism and socialism, or not?

B. Would you say these wealthy people actually do have a good deal, a little, or no influence at all on what these colleges teach students about capitalism and socialism?

Question 20.
Do you think a man who gives a large sum of money to a college should or should not have a right to some say on what the college teaches its students about capitalism and socialism?

Question 23.
Some experts believe the following statements are true, while other experts believe they are false. Would you say this statement was more true than false, or more false than true?
A. You have got to have a college education these days if you want to get ahead in the world.
B. Most college graduates cannot even write a good letter.
C. Most college professors are not practical enough to run a business successfully.
D. A college education is just as important for a girl who wants to get married right after graduation as for a girl who wants to have a career.
E. There is a lot of communism being taught in colleges today.
F. The average student in a private college pays for about half of what his education actually costs and then the college pays the rest.
G. It would be a good idea for all college students to work for at least part of their college expenses.
H. Since there are business and professional men on most boards of trustees that run colleges, there ought to be labor union officials who are trustees also.
I. If a college turns out first-rate football teams, it is a pretty good sign that it will also provide its students with a good all-round education.
J. There are lots of young people in our colleges now that should not be there.
K. There are lots of young people not now in college who should be there.
L. A jewish student has a harder time getting into most colleges than a non-Jewish student with the same high school marks.

Question 27.
B. Do you think the following statement is more true than false, or more false than true: A boy/girl fresh out of college is not much use to an employer until he/she has unlearned a lot of the things the professors taught him/her.

Miscellaneous Other Items

AIPO: American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup)
RFOR and RCOM: Roper Associates
NORC: National Opinion Research Center
OPOR: Office of Public Opinion Research

Year

1936 7. Do you think a college education is worth what it costs in time and money to persons who are not going into professions? (AIPO 59)

1938 2. Which do you think has a better chance of earning a living today -- a high school graduate who has had four years of experience, or a man just out of college? (RFOR 3)

1939 6a. Do you feel you have had enough education? (AIPO 150)

16. Have you sent or do you intend to send your children to college? Why or why not? (RFOR 13)

1940 2a. Some successful people think too much importance is placed on high school and college education. Do you agree with this? (AIPO 183)

1. Many people say there is too much importance placed on education these days. Do you agree or disagree? Why? (OPOR 301)

2a. Do you think young people today are getting a better education in school than their parents got? Why? (OPOR 301)

[Are some high school students] better off at work? (OPOR 301)

1943 15a. How far in school do you think young people should be required to go today? (AIPO 297K)

15a. [preamble] For most people, do you feel education is absolutely necessary to be a success in life? (AIPO 298)

12. [What would you say is] the most important thing for children to get from education? (NORC 217 -- repeated in 1955)

13a. Are you satisfied with what [your children] are getting from their education in school? (NORC 217 -- repeated in 1955)

1945 Large battery of items (RFOR 46 -- see Appendix B.1)

3. . . .Around here, would you say that the schools are doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job? (NORC 238 -- repeated in 1947)

1947 Same as Question 3 on NORC 238 (1945). (NORC 245)

1948 18. Generally speaking, do you think a person has to have a college education if he is going to get and keep a really good job, or do you think it just makes it easier for him, or do you think he can do as well or better by spending those years on something else? (RFOR 71)

6. In general, would you say you are reasonably well satisfied with -- the kind of education young people are getting today? (AIPO 434T)

1949 Large battery of items (RFOR 76 -- see Appendix B.1)

Do you think that grade schools today pay enough attention to teaching students how to spell or not? (AIPO 447 -- repeated in 1957 [see text])

1950 1. In general, would you say that school children today are being taught more worthwile and useful things than children were twenty years ago, not as [many], or about as [many] as then? (RCOM 40)

2. [Would you say you are] very satisfied, only fairly well satisfied, or not very satisfied with the public school system in your community? (RCOM 40)

3a. Up to what age do you think the law should require that children go to school? (RCOM 40)

7. What do you think are the two or three most important things young people should get out of high school? (RCOM 40)

9. Compared to twenty years ago, [do the schools have] better trained and more capable teachers. . . ? (RCOM 40)

1952 12a. If you had the time would you like to spend a few hours each week studying a subject such as those taught in college? Which of these subjects would you most like to study now? (AIPO 484)

1955 22. [What would you say is] the most important thing for children to get from education? (NORC 370 -- also asked in 1943)

Are you satisfied with what [your children] are getting from their education in school? (NORC 370 -- also asked in 1943)

24. [Are there] any changes you'd like to see in the public schools? (NORC 370)

1958 2. [preamble] What is the biggest thing wrong with our schools? (AIPO 595)

1959 Would you favor increasing the amount [of homework] in high school? In grade school? (AIPO 613 -- repeated in 1961 and 1965 [see text])

1960 Respondents asked to identify "problems in this community" (from list) -- poor quality of education (AIPO 634)

1965 On the whole, would you say that you are satisfied or dissatisfied with your children's education? (AIPO 715 -- also asked in 1963 and 1966 [see text], again in 1966 and twice in 1969)

1966 Same as items from AIPO 715 (1965). (AIPO 734)

1968 In general, how much respect would you say you have for today's college students as a whole -- a great deal, some, or hardly any? (AIPO 760)

1969 Same as item from AIPO 715 (1965). (AIPO 777 and AIPO 778)

Excerpts from Eighth Annual Survey of
the Public's Attitudes
toward the public schools.
A Project Jointly Conducted by
The Gallup Poll and the
Charles F. Kettering Foundation.

Public Opinion Surveys, Princeton, New Jersey, 1976.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The eighth annual survey of the series has attempted to measure the attitudes of Americans toward their public schools. Each year great care is taken to include new issues of concern to both educators and the public, as well as trend questions that have ongoing impact in the educational world.

This year's survey has been funded by /I/D/E/A, Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. In prior years, these studies have been sponsored by CFK, Ltd. and The Ford Foundation.

To make certain that the survey would embrace important issues in the field of education, a group of educators, along with the project directors from Gallup, met in Miami to discuss and evaluate preliminary questions and possible issues to be included in this study.

Panel members included:

James Betchkal, Editor, American School Board Journal, National School Boards Association, Evanston, Illinois

Edward Brainard, Director, Leadership Development, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, Colorado (Now Professor of Education, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado)

B. Frank Brown, Division Director, /I/D/E/A, Melbourne, Florida

Stanley M. Elam, Editor, Phi Delta Kappan, Bloomington, Indiana

William J. Ellena, Superintendent, Charlottesville Public Schools, Charlottesville, Virginia

Sidney P. Marland, Jr., President, College Entrance Examination Board, New York, New York

William Mitchell, Superintendent, Greeley Public Schools, Greeley, Colorado

John W. Porter, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan

Samuel G. Sava, Executive Director, /I/D/E/A, and Vice President for Educational Activities, Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio

Suzanne Sepper, Teacher, Bayview Elementary School, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

M. Donald Thomas, Superintendent of Schools, Salt Lake City School District, Salt Lake City, Utah

We wish to thank these panel members for their valuable suggestions.

George Gallup

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The Sample

The sample in this eighth annual survey included a total of 1549 adults (18 years and older). It is described as a modified probability sample

of the nation. Personal, in-home interviewing was conducted in every area of the nation and in all types of communities. A full analysis of the sample is in the appendix to this report.

Time of Interviewing

The fieldwork for this study was conducted during the period April 21 through April 25, 1976.

The Interviewing Form

Questions included in the survey instrument were selected following extensive pretesting by the trained staff of interviewers maintained by the Gallup organizations.

Findings from this report apply only to the country as a whole and not to specific local communities. Local surveys, using the same questions, can be conducted to determine how local communities compare with the national norm.*

INTRODUCTION

Aside from its historical significance, the year 1976 may well prove to be the turning point in the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Evidence from the present survey indicates a levelling off in the downward trend of recent years in the public's attitudes toward the public schools.

The public schools, as other public institutions, reflect the major trends in society. And the year 1976 has witnessed a nationwide shift toward more traditional values in almost every field.

Whether we have come to the end of the era of permissiveness is yet to be seen. The fact remains, however, that the public is now demanding stricter rules dealing with the behavior of the young and higher standards in the public schools.

Juvenile delinquency, increasing yearly, has focused attention on the need for moral education not only in the home but in the schools. Laws in many states are being changed to permit stiffer sentences for young offenders. It is hoped that such laws and new ways of dealing with the problem of discipline that are being tried in schools, will bring about a lessening of the turmoil found in so many cities.

A growing demand to place greater emphasis on the basics in the school curriculum is evidenced in the findings of the present survey. Meeting

*Suggestions for such a local survey are outlined in The Gallup Polls of Attitudes toward Education (1969-1973), Chapter 7, "A look into Your School District." Available from Phi Delta Kappa, 8th and Union Streets, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. $2.25.

this demand could result in higher national test scores and increased respect for the public schools.

MAJOR PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN 1976

Discipline continues to head the list of major problems when a sample of the nation's adults is asked to cite what they perceive as the most important problems of the public schools in their own communities. In fact, discipline has been named most often seven times during the last eight years.

The percentage of respondents citing discipline as the number one problem, however, has shown no increase during recent years. Next to discipline, and in second place, are the problems associated with busing and integration. In third place this year is lack of proper financial support. These were also named second and third, respectively, in last year's survey.

The one significant change from 1975 is the marked increase in the number of persons in the sample who cite "a poor curriculum." This complaint, listed seventh in importance last year, has moved up to fourth place, undoubtedly because of the wide publicity given to the drop in national test scores and growing concern about the number of functional illiterates among school leavers.

Below, in order of mention, is the list of major problems of the local public schools as perceived by the residents of these communities:

1. Lack of discipline
2. Integration/segregation/busing
3. Lack of proper financial support
4. Poor curriculum
5. Use of drugs
6. Difficulty of getting "good" teachers
7. Parents' lack of interest
8. Size of school/classes
9. School board policies
10. Pupils' lack of interest

1976 RATING OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A five-point scale, familiar to the American public, was employed for the first time in 1974 to establish a base for measuring the public's perceptions of the quality of public school education in their own communities.

The question asked is this:
"Students are often given the grades A B C D and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here -- A B C D or Fail?"

A significant drop in the public's ratings was recorded between the years 1974 and 1975. However, the decline has now levelled off, with ratings for 1976 being virtually the same as for 1975.

Here are the ratings given the public schools nationally for the last three years:

Ratings given the public schools	National totals		
	1976 percent	1975 percent	1974 percent
A rating	13	13	18
B rating	29	30	30
C rating	28	28	21
D rating	10	9	6
Fail	6	7	5
Don't know/no answer	14	13	20

If the top two positions -- A and B -- are combined, and the bottom three -- C D and Fail -- are combined, the findings indicate that the lowest ratings come from those parents who send their children to private or parochial schools. Those with children in the public schools give the highest ratings to the schools, but even in the case of this group only 50 percent give the schools an A or B rating. This contrasts with only 34 percent of those whose children attend private or parochial schools who give an A or B rating.

	National totals percent	No children in schools percent	Public school parents percent	Parochial school parents percent
A rating	13	12	16	6
B rating	29	26	34	28
C rating	28	26	30	40
D rating	10	9	10	12
Fail	6	7	5	4
Don't know/no answer	14	20	5	10

When the ratings given by the major socioeconomic groups are analyzed, it is evident that the people who are least satisfied with the quality of education offered in their local schools are the recent graduates, the 18 to 29 age group, those who live in the center cities as opposed to the suburbs, and citizens who live in the Western states.

The Question: "Students are often given the grades A B C D and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here -- A B C D or Fail?"

	A percent	B percent	C percent	D percent	Fail percent	Don't know/ no answer percent
National	13	29	28	10	6	14
Sex:						
Men	11	32	28	11	4	14
Women	14	27	29	9	7	14
Race:						
White	13	30	28	9	6	14
Nonwhite	10	21	33	13	9	14
Age:						
18 to 29 years	8	25	33	15	6	13
30 to 49 years	15	30	30	10	5	10
50 years and over	15	31	22	6	7	19
Education:						
Grade school	18	22	27	8	5	20
High school	12	27	30	11	7	13
College	11	37	25	9	6	12
Community size:						
1 million and over	11	27	32	13	6	11
500,000 - 999,999	11	34	21	13	7	14
50,000 - 499,999	10	26	32	11	10	11
2,500 - 49,999	13	33	25	8	2	19
Under 2,500	17	29	28	6	4	16
Central city	7	23	31	16	11	12
Suburbs	14	34	28	7	5	12
All other	16	30	27	7	3	17
Region:						
East	11	31	29	10	5	14
Midwest	16	32	27	8	4	13
South	13	27	29	9	7	15
West	10	24	30	15	8	13

HOW TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

After having obtained the rating of their school by the different groups in the public, the next question sought to determine what, in the public's opinion, could be done to improve the quality of local education. As an aid, each respondent was handed a card listing a dozen suggestions and had the opportunity to choose as many as he or she wished.

Answers to this question correspond closely with those given in answer to the question asking about the most important problems faced by the local schools.

This approach sheds further light on the public's current concern that the schools should "devote more attention to teaching of basic skills." This is the most popular suggestion, with 51 percent of all respondents choosing this as a way to improve the quality of education in the local schools. Close behind, in fact, with virtually the same number of choices, is the suggestion to "enforce stricter discipline."

The proposals that get the third and fourth highest number of mentions are to "meet individual needs of students" with 42 percent, and to "improve parent-school relations" with 41 percent.

The top three choices of parents whose children now attend the public schools are the same as the top three of the general public. Oddly enough,

parents place even higher on their list, in fourth place, "instruction in morals" which has been generally regarded as the sole responsibility of home and church.

The Question: "Which of these ways do you think would do most to improve the quality of public school education overall?"

	National totals percent	No children in schools percent	Public school parents percent	Parochial school parents percent
Devote more attention to teaching of basic skills.	51	47	55	60
Enforce stricter discipline	50	47	52	64
Meet individual needs of students.	42	39	47	44
Improve parent-school relations	41	43	36	47
Emphasize moral development	39	34	45	49
Emphasize career education and development of salable skills.	38	39	36	37
Provide opportunities for teachers to keep up to date regarding new methods	29	27	32	29
Raise academic standards.	27	28	23	38
Raise teachers' salaries.	14	15	16	8
Increase amount of homework.	14	12	17	21
Build new buildings	9	8	12	7
Lower age for compulsory attendance.	5	4	6	1
None.	1	1	*	-
Don't know/no answer.	4	4	2	3

*Less than 1 percent
(Totals add to more than 100 percent because of multiple answers.)

NATIONWIDE TEST FOR GRADUATION

A consensus is found in favor of requiring high school students to pass a standard examination in order to receive a high school diploma.

Present survey findings on this question show a substantial shift in the public's attitude during the last eighteen years. The question posed then by The Gallup Poll is the same one as that used in the 1976 survey.

The question first asked in 1958 was:
"Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard nationwide examination in order to get a high school diploma?"

The findings for the two surveys show:

	National test for graduation	
	1976 percent	1958 percent
In favor of such a test	65	50
Opposed	31	39
No opinion	4	11

It is the least well educated, strangely enough, who are most in favor of such a requirement. The same finding was reported in the 1958 study. Those who have had the advantage of one or more years of college education are much more evenly divided: 53 percent are in favor, 44 percent opposed. Those with a grade school education vote 76 percent in favor, 18 percent opposed.

Persons who are in the 18 to 29 year age bracket are less enthusiastic than older persons, possibly because some may believe that such a test would have deprived them of their own diplomas.

Apart from these differences, the survey findings show that a majority favors such a requirement in all sections of the nation and in the large cities as well as the small towns.

The Question: "Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard nationwide examination in order to get a high school diploma?"

	Yes, they should percent	No, they should not percent	Don't know/ no answer percent
National	65	31	4
Sex:			
Men	66	31	3
Women	65	30	5
Race:			
White	65	31	4
Nonwhite	67	27	6

(continued)

	Yes, they should percent	No, they should not percent	Don't know/ no answer percent
Age:			
18 to 29 years	56	41	3
30 to 49 years	67	30	3
50 years and over	71	23	6
Education:			
Grade school	76	18	6
High school	69	27	4
College	53	44	3
Community size:			
1 million and over	70	25	5
500,000 - 999,999	69	28	3
50,000 - 499,999	67	31	2
2,500 - 49,999	68	31	1
Under 2,500	58	35	7
Region:			
East	65	31	4
Midwest	66	30	4
South	64	31	5
West	67	31	2

THE PUBLIC'S CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DECLINE IN NATIONAL TEST SCORES

The American people, judging from present and past survey data, do not share the same skepticism about standardized tests found among many educators.

They believe, for example, that the decline in national test scores in recent years means that the quality of education today is declining. Of course, the test scores may only confirm what many already think about the schools.

There is surprising unanimity among all groups in the population that the tests are actually measuring a decline in the quality of education. By majorities of about two-to-one, all segments of the population, in all areas of the nation, believe that the tests are correctly assessing the situation.

The first question asked was:
"Do you believe that a decline in national test scores of students in recent years means that the quality of education today is declining?"

By socioeconomic groups:

	Quality of education		
	Yes, is declining percent	No, is not percent	Don't know/ no answer percent
National	59	31	10
Sex:			
Men	61	31	8
Women	58	31	11
Race:			
White	60	31	9
nonwhite	58	29	13
Age:			
18 to 29 years	52	40	8
30 to 49 years	62	29	9
50 years and over	63	26	11
Education:			
Grade school	54	25	21
High school	61	29	10
College	58	39	3
Community size:			
1 million and over	67	28	5
500,000 - 999,999	64	29	7
50,000 - 499,999	62	29	9
2,500 - 49,999	58	33	9
Under 2,500	50	34	16
Region:			
East	62	26	12
Midwest	56	38	6
South	56	31	13
West	66	27	7

All respondents were then asked to explain what they thought brought about the decline in test scores. Each was handed a card with eight reasons listed, including one for the doubters, reading "The tests are not reliable."

The second question put to respondents was:
"Here are some reasons that have been given to explain the decline in national test scores. Will you look over these reasons and then tell me which ones you think are most responsible for this decline."

Respondents, who were permitted to choose more than one reason for the decline in test scores, voted in this manner:

	National totals percent	No children in schools percent	Public school parents percent	Parochial school parents percent
1. Less parent attention, concern and supervision of the child.	65	64	65	72
2. Students aren't as motivated to do well. .	52	50	57	53
3. Too much television viewing. . .	49	48	51	51
4. Society is becoming too permissive.	49	47	49	61
5. Teachers are giving less attention to students.	39	39	41	32
6. It's easier to get into college now	16	20	10	14
7. Schools are expanding the number of courses offered	10	12	8	4
8. The tests are not reliable.	16	15	16	16
Other and no opinion . . .	14	13	15	15

Overall, the public places the greatest blame for declining test scores on parents, on society, on children's lack of motivation, and on too much television viewing. Interestingly, parents of children now attending school most often cite the very same top reason for declining scores -- "less parent attention, concern and supervision." Parents themselves are readily accepting the blame and are not trying to place the burden on the schools, as one might expect them to do.

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

School board members and teachers often complain about the lack of citizen interest in school matters. Lack of knowledge about the problems of the schools, especially the financial problems, all too often results in the defeat of school budgets and school bonds.

Both school and community gain when citizens do take an active interest in the schools, but without a way to engage the interest, and to involve citizens in school problems, nothing much happens. A few individuals will attend school board meetings. The fact remains, however, that those people in the community who could make the greatest contribution to education have almost no way to participate in a meaningful way.

School boards, typically, are too busy dealing with financial and staff problems to spend much time on the many educational matters that must be dealt with today. The appointment, by the school board, of citizen advisory committees offers a practical way -- and judging from the survey results, a popular way -- to enlist the interest of an amazing number of persons in the community.

That this plan, now followed in some communities, offers great opportunities to involve citizens in the problems of the schools is fully evidenced by the results of the present survey.

The question asked was:
"Some school boards have appointed citizen advisory committees to deal with a number of school problems such as discipline, the curriculum, textbook selection, teacher evaluation, the athletic program and the like. The committees report their findings to the school board for possible action. If such a plan were adopted here (or exists here), which of these problems would <u>you</u> most like to deal with on a citizen advisory committee?"

Only 10 percent of all those questioned said they would not like to serve on such a committee or could not make up their minds. While many of the other 90 percent who chose committees on which they would like to serve might find it impossible or impractical to carry out their intention, still an extraordinary number of persons in a typical community are sufficiently interested to fill places on a score of committees. And, if such committees were appointed, then hundreds of citizens might be involved in local school matters.

Each person interviewed in the survey was handed a card that listed 20 committees. He was asked if he would like to serve on any one; in fact, he could choose as many as he wished.

The following list shows the percentage of respondents selecting each committee as one on which he would like to serve.

Advisory committees	Percent who would like to serve on such a committee* percent
1. Discipline and related problems	47
2. Student-teacher relations	31
3. Career education	29
4. Student dropouts	29
5. Teacher evaluation	28
6. The handicapped student	26
7. Educational costs-finances	22
8. The curriculum	21
9. Education for citizenship	19
10. Work-study programs	19
11. Home study and work habits	19
12. Community use of school buildings	16
13. Pupil assessment and test results	15
14. School facilities	14
15. Public relations of schools	13
16. School transportation	12
17. The athletic program	12
18. Educational innovations	12
19. Extracurricular activities	11
20. Progress of recent graduates	9
None	4
Don't know/no answer	6

*Adds to more than 100 percent because of multiple answers.

QUALITIES MOST IMPORTANT IN DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD

In a society that constantly changes, the qualities that should be developed in its children will change also. What qualities do Americans today regard as most important? Which should be given the most attention by parents and schools? Which are the most neglected?

To shed light on these concerns, the following question was included in the survey:

"Of course all of the qualities listed on this card are important in the overall development of a child. But which one do you regard as the MOST important?"

	National totals	No children in schools	Public school parents	Parochial school parents
	percent	percent	percent	percent
1. Learning to think for oneself.	26	26	26	23
2. Ability to get along with others.	23	25	20	20
3. Willingness to accept responsibility	21	19	21	26
4. High moral standards . .	13	11	15	20
5. Eagerness to learn . . .	11	10	13	10
6. Desire to excel.	4	6	3	1
Don't know/no answer. . . .	2	3	2	-

All respondents were offered the opportunity to make a second choice among these six qualities. When the second choices are added to the first choices, then "Willingness to accept responsibility" moves up to second place, displacing "Ability to get along with others," which drops to third place.

Looking at the same list of qualities, respondents were asked: "Which one do you think is most neglected by parents today?"

	National totals	No children in schools	Public school parents	Parochial school parents
	percent	percent	percent	percent
1. High moral standards. .	32	29	36	44
2. Willingness to accept responsibility.	30	33	29	23
3. Learning to think for oneself	14	15	11	14
4. Ability to get along with others	8	7	9	7
5. Eagerness to learn. . .	5	4	5	2
6. Desire to excel	4	3	5	5
Don't know/no answer . . .	7	9	5	5

And as a final question in this series:
"And which one do you think is most neglected by schools?"

	National totals percent	No children in schools percent	Public school parents percent	Parochial school parents percent
1. High moral standards .	26	24	28	26
2. Learning to think for oneself.	15	15	14	11
3. Eagerness to learn . .	13	14	12	15
4. Willingness to accept responsibility	12	13	10	20
5. Desire to excel. . . .	9	8	12	11
6. Ability to get along with others.	8	9	8	5
Don't know/no answer. . .	17	17	16	12

HOW THE PUBLIC FEELS ABOUT UNIONIZATION OF TEACHERS

Whether teachers should join unions has been a highly controversial issue in many areas of the United States for many years. At the present time, most teachers of the nation belong to unions or associations that bargain over salaries and working conditions. The question arises as to how the American public presently appraises this situation. Has unionization helped or hurt public school education? This is the question that was put to the public and the replies reveal a mixed reaction.

The question:
"Most teachers in the nation now belong to unions or associations that bargain over salaries, working conditions and the like. Has unionization, in your opinion, helped, hurt, or made no difference in the quality of public school education in the United States?"

	National totals percent	No children in schools percent	Public school parents percent	Parochial school parents percent
Helped.	22	22	23	24
Hurt.	38	38	36	47
Made no difference. . . .	27	26	28	25
Don't know/no answer. . .	13	14	13	4

Older persons are much more likely to say that unionization has hurt the quality of education. The age group 18 to 29 is almost evenly divided. In the bigger cities of the nation, where the unions tend to be

more militant, a slightly greater number say that unionization has "hurt."

Here are the findings by socioeconomic groups:

	Helped	Hurt	Made no difference	Don't know/ no answer
	percent	percent	percent	percent
National	22	38	27	13
Sex:				
Men	24	42	25	9
Women	21	34	29	16
Race:				
White	21	39	28	12
Nonwhite	26	31	22	21
Age:				
18 to 29 years	26	30	34	10
30 to 49 years	24	37	26	13
50 years and over	16	46	23	15
Education:				
Grade school	18	39	25	18
High school	20	37	30	13
College	29	40	23	8
Community size:				
1 million and over	17	40	34	9
500,000 - 999,999	27	38	26	9
50,000 - 499,999	25	39	27	9
2,500 - 49,999	22	37	26	15
Under 2,500	20	36	24	20
Region:				
East	20	43	28	9
Midwest	19	40	29	12
South	27	33	23	17
West	23	37	28	12

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MORAL BEHAVIOR

The American people have reached the conclusion that many parents either won't or can't control the behavior of their children. They are ready, therefore, to turn over part of the responsibility to the schools. In the 1975 survey of The Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools it was reported that 79 percent of all those questioned favored instruction in morals and moral behavior in the schools. Only 15 percent opposed. It was also pointed out in the same report that parents of children now in school were, of all groups, most in favor of this instruction.

In the present survey, a sizable majority of those questioned want part of the responsibility for moral behavior turned over to the schools. Just how this can be done raises many issues. One hundred years ago,

McGuffey's Readers pointed out a moral in almost every paragraph. And thousands of years ago, parables performed this service. The modern equivalent may be the case history, as discussed in the 1975 report.

The Question: "Parents now have responsibility for the moral behavior of their children. Do you think that the schools should take on a share of this responsibility, or not?"

	National totals percent	No children in schools percent	Public school parents percent	Parochial school parents percent
Yes, schools should take on share of responsibility.	67	65	69	69
No, they should not . . .	30	31	29	26
Don't know/no answer. . .	3	4	2	5

The Question: "Do you believe that a decline in national test scores of students in recent years means that the quality of education today is declining?"

	National totals percent	No children in schools percent	Public school parents percent	Parochial school parents percent
Yes, is declining. . . .	59	60	58	64
No, is not	31	30	32	28
Don't know/no answer . .	10	10	10	8